From the "On" Switch to Encryption:
The Final Report of the
Joint Oversight Committee on State Management Systems

I do not fear computers. I fear the lack of them. - Isaac Asimov

Technology... is a queer thing. It brings you great gifts with one hand and it stabs you in the back with the other. - C.P. Snow

INTRODUCTION

Asimov's oft-quoted statement becomes more profound with each technological advance. Snow's observation was printed in the *New York Times* in 1971 when computers with blinking lights and massive tapes occupied huge rooms and data sets were entered by armies of keypunch operators. Both statements speak to the double-edged sword that technology represents. As more and more complex information systems become integral to our daily lives, the more we are dependent on them working and working well. The benefits of modern technology are limitless. From medicine to communication to information management, the average person has, without question, been well-served by technology. Like most good things, however, it does not come without a price. Dependence on, even enslavement to, technology seems to be the price of technology.

Consider, for example, the mounting hysteria over the Year 2000 bug and all of the conceivable disasters (some more realistic than others) if programs and chips are not prepared for the new millennium. Consider the benefits that those systems have brought to society--an easy task given the predicted dire consequences if the systems should fail.

Information technology (IT) reaches into even the most remote corner of Montana. Anyone with a phone line can access the world through the Internet for fun, commerce, or research or to do one's taxes. The hiker stranded in the wilderness stands a much better chance of being rescued in one piece with the development and maintenance of radio technology. Geographic information systems can be used to plot the very ground on which we all live, storing and manipulating layers of data on soil type, ownership, fauna, archaeological resources, vegetation, and myriad other characteristics. Because of Montana's rural nature and the vast distances between population centers, information technology and telecommunications have assumed an especially profound role in the day-to-day activities of the state's individuals, private businesses, local governments, and state government agencies.

Authorized for a second interim and scheduled to terminate in 2002, the Oversight Committee on State Management Systems (OCSMS or Committee) explored the manifold opportunities and corresponding potential liabilities that IT presents to the people of Montana and their state government.

With this report, the members of the OCSMS hope to acquaint their colleagues in the Legislature with some quick, readily understandable facts about the often intimidating realm of IT in state and local governments.

The OCSMS exists because the Legislature does indeed have a stake in the development of IT. Effective legislative oversight of information systems can only be accomplished if policymakers are armed with enough basic knowledge to ask the right questions and steer IT policy in the direction that will maximize technology's benefits and minimize risks and costs.

Why Should Legislators Care About Overseeing Electronic Information Systems?[1]

1. State governments rely on information.

   State governments acquire and produce vast quantities of information. The collection of data, the conversion of data into information, the storage of information, and the multiple uses to which that information is applied are the main activities of many government employees. These activities are needed in order to govern the people effectively.

2. State governments rely on information processing tools.

   State government processes have become highly automated. It is impractical to pull the plug on technology and seek to replace it with labor or other tools. Doing so would impair the ability of state governments to function effectively.

3. State governments seek to improve their service delivery.

   Nationwide, state governments are embracing the principles of better service delivery. They do this to improve citizen satisfaction, to cope with increasing demands of the citizenry, and to check the growth of bureaucracy. Increasingly, the federal

[1]The title and items #1 through #5 of this section are quoted directly from Dave Larson, Director of Information Systems, Kansas State Legislature. "Legislative Oversight of Information Systems"; *Journal of the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries*; Vol. 4, No.1; Spring 1998.

government hands over responsibility for implementing programs to the state without the accompanying funding. Better information technology tools give states the leverage to achieve these objectives.

4. Information systems cost money.
   What legislator doesn't keep a watchful eye on the bottom line of government?

5. Oversight is a legislative responsibility.
   Legislators perform many roles during their service; such as representative, consensus-builder, manager, and overseer. A legislator generally oversees through one of four types of committees: (1) a committee on appropriation of funding; (2) a committee on governmental organization or structure; (3) a committee on the rules and regulations of state government; or (4) a committee on evaluation or auditing.

   Even if a legislator is not a member of one of these committees, he will eventually be asked to vote on these issues when they come before the entire body (emphasis added).

BACKGROUND

"Oversight of information technology is not just for the technician. States have information systems in order to provide people, like legislators, with the information they need to make decisions, which in turn affect the citizenry. Information systems help serve the legislator's constituents better, manage resources efficiently, and develop needed products or services."[2]

In the last decade, the Montana Legislature has responded to the exponential growth of state government IT in a number of ways.

[2]Dave Larson, Director of Information Systems, Kansas State Legislature. "Legislative Oversight of Information Systems"; *Journal of the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries*; Vol. 4, No.1; Spring 1998.

% **House Joint Resolution No. 48**

In 1991, House Joint Resolution No. 48 (HJR 48) directed the Legislative Finance and Audit Committees to join the Department of Administration (DOA) in studying the management of information processing technology. Those entities formed a subcommittee to fulfill the directives contained in HJR 48. The study resulted in the following recommendations:

1) allow the DOA to evaluate, review, and approve acquisition of all types of data processing equipment;

2) allow the DOA to approve the acquisition of software to ensure compliance with the statewide data processing plan and network compatibility; and

3) require the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and the Montana University System (MUS) to submit software and equipment acquisition to the DOA for review when those acquisitions affect the central computer or statewide data network.

The Subcommittee exercised general oversight of the DOA's data processing and information technology activities; attempted to clarify statutes related to computer crime; and endorsed the DOA's concept of consolidating closely linked legacy systems including Payroll, Personnel, and Position Control (PPP), warrant writer, Statewide Budgeting and Accounting System (SBAS), and the state's property accountability management systems. The Subcommittee also directed the DOA to develop a statewide data processing plan and prepare guidelines; encouraged interdepartmental coordination on large projects; and recommended that the DOA, OPI, and the Department of Commerce discuss computer system compatibility with local governments.

The encouragement of interdepartmental coordination on large projects translated into an expansion and strengthening of the role of the Data Processing Advisory Council (DPAC). The Subcommittee recommended that the DPAC, later renamed the Information Technology Advisory Council (ITAC), provide a forum for agency discussion and planning for large systems that could serve several entities.

% **Senate Joint Resolution No. 23**

It had only been 4 years since the HJR 48 study, but technology and the state's access to it advanced considerably. Recognizing that modern technology may have been at odds with some of Montana's laws and anticipating a large-scale

integration of various fragmented state legacy systems, the 54th Legislature adopted Senate Joint Resolution No. 23 (SJR 23). SJR 23 established the Joint Interim Subcommittee on State Management Systems (Subcommittee) to study:

1) the laws governing state personnel, finance, and asset management, with the goal of proposing revisions to provide clarity and internal consistency, while ensuring that state agencies are able to maintain strict accountability for state assets; and

2) opportunities for and advantages of installing an integrated system of state personnel, finance, and asset management tools and to evaluate statutory changes that may be necessary to support the integration.

SJR 23 also required the Subcommittee to include with its final report recommendations for the general revision of laws governing state fiscal and personnel management and to provide a schedule by which integration of the state's legacy systems could be accomplished.

The Subcommittee formed three task forces to address budgeting, accounting, revenue estimating, personnel, purchasing, system users, technical implementation of an asset management system, and intergovernmental integration of systems. Numerous recommendations emerged, many dealing with the reengineering of Montana's business processes.

The Subcommittee also recommended that the 1997 Legislature continue the Committee on State Management Systems to receive status reports from the DOA regarding the reengineering effort and to address IT issues in state and local governments.

Much of the endeavor that was later to be named the Montana Project to Reengineer the Revenue and Information Management Environment (MT PRRIME) was conceived during this interim study.

% **House Bill No. 89**

The 1997-98 Oversight Committee on State Management Systems was authorized through passage of House Bill No. 89 (HB 89). HB 89 contains two specific requirements:

1) The Committee must exercise legislative oversight of IT and state management systems, including review of proposed budgets, legislation, and major information technology contracts; and

2) the Committee must actively involve local governments in IT planning and encourage communication between local governments and state agencies with respect to IT and the management of state assets.

The other provisions of the legislation are optional but authorize the Committee to review laws governing state personnel, finance, and asset management and administrative rules.

1997-98 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON STATE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS INTERIM IN REVIEW-- A NARRATIVE

Requirements Contained in House Bill No. 89 (as interpreted in the study plan) and How They Were Met

Requirement #1: *The Committee must exercise legislative oversight of information technology and state management systems, including review of proposed budgets, legislation, and major information technology contracts*.

T To prepare for the interim's oversight activities, the Committee received an overview of recent legislation and legislative initiatives that authorized state government IT oversight by a legislative body.

T Also to assist Committee members in preparing for their role as an IT oversight body, Tony Herbert, Administrator, Department of Administration Information Services Division (ISD), presented the Committee with a general introduction to IT, state IT governance, and strategic planning.

T Staff prepared and presented a review of House Bill No. 188 (HB 188), the Information Technology Bonding Bill, to inform Committee members of the various IT projects it funded.

T The Committee received regular MT PRRIME updates and engaged in discussions with the MT PRRIME project managers and the Legislative Fiscal Analyst regarding progress of the budget module, the Montana Budget Analysis and Reporting System (MBARS), as well as the progress of the Financial, Asset Management, and Human Resource Modules. The Committee also participated in discussions and triggered an in-depth

examination of MUS's decision to pursue SCT/Banner implementation for its business process systems rather than PeopleSoft, the MT PRRIME software.

- **T** The Departments of Corrections and Revenue appeared before the Committee to describe IT projects underway as a result of HB 188 bonding authority.

- **T** ISD kept the Committee apprised of its rate adjustment plans, Executive Planning Proposal (EPP) items, and general preparation for the 1999 Legislature.

- **T** ISD provided presentations on major projects underway in the Division. These presentations included background, technical, and budget information.

- **T** Committee members were kept informed of the activities of the Information Technology Advisory Council (ITAC) and attended some of ITAC's meetings, including portions of the strategic planning meeting. Meeting dates for the Committee were scheduled to coincide with the ITAC meeting dates to facilitate member attendance.

- **T** ISD presented regular reports on the progress of its Year 2000 compliance efforts for state government systems.

- **T** Committee staff kept members informed about Legislative Branch IT developments, including the Branch Web page, legislator use of computers during the session, and the Legislative Automated Workflow System (LAWS).

- **T** The Committee has discussed the provisions of IT contracts and will consider at its July 23 meeting whether to ask staff to research various options for strengthening those contracts and/or providing higher levels of review.

Requirement #2: *The Committee must actively involve local governments and encourage communications between local governments and state agencies with respect to information technology and the management of state assets.*

- **r** The Committee decided at the first meeting to go beyond simply inviting representatives of local governments to the meetings, but to become

actively involved by including the issue on most agendas, identifying the problems and lapses in communication, and providing an important forum for ISD-local government discussion.

- An employee of Cascade County described for the Committee all of the ways that Cascade County interfaces with state systems. This provided the Committee with an idea of the scope of the potential problems and the need for greater communication.

- The Committee asked for presentations by both the DOA and local government representatives describing what steps they would like to see taken to improve communications and enhance the state-local government IT interfaces.

- The Committee requested and received an analysis of the impact that MT PRRIME may have on local government systems. MT PRRIME's report to the Committee on that subject resulted from project managers' conference calls and conversations with various local government representatives.

- In part, as a result of the forum that the Committee provided, ISD has included in its EPP a request for Intergovernmental IT Coordination Services, the stated purpose of the request being to provide for "IT coordination and support services for local government agencies". The EPP form continues, "The purpose of this service would be to work with local governments to identify opportunities for standardizing on technology, coordinating agency deployment of technology within local government, greater use of joint contracts for equipment and services, and a number of technology-specific services." The request would add 7 FTE and $404,556 to ISD's budget. This EPP item has been endorsed by the Montana Association of Counties Information Technology Association (MACITA).

Options Afforded the Committee in House Bill No. 89 and How They Were Exercised

Option #1: *The Committee may study laws governing state personnel, finance, and asset management to ensure clear, consistent language and maintenance of strict accountability for state and nonstate assets entrusted to the state. Statutes governing personnel, finance, and asset management involve more than 12 titles and*

numerous sections of the Montana Code Annotated. Areas of code that the Committee may address include, but are not necessarily limited to, Titles 2, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 39, 49, 77, 85, and 87. Essentially, any portion of Montana code that deals with state resources (property, money, personnel, wildlife, parks, etc.) is open to review by the Committee on State Management Systems.

- **Ë** The Committee chose not to delve deeply into the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) to identify inconsistencies and changes needed due to changing technologies but rather chose to respond if an agency proposed any changes necessary to accommodate IT projects. To that end, staff sent a letter to IT managers in state agencies soliciting proposals for statutory change to accommodate any of their IT projects. The Committee received no responses.

Option #2: *The Committee may also study opportunities for implementing an information management plan that integrates the state's legacy software systems. Legacy systems are those that handle Montana's accounting, revenue estimating, personnel information, property procurement, and other business functions. This integration project, now known as the Montana Project to Reengineer the Revenue and Information Management Environment (MT PRRIME) began in March 1996 and, at this point, is well underway.*

- **Ë** As part of its general oversight function, the Committee has kept close tabs on the progress of MT PRRIME through regular updates and discussions with members of the project team. The Committee has also engaged in discussions with the Legislative Fiscal Analyst concerning the budget module and scheduled release dates.

Options #3 & #4: *The Committee is also authorized to review administrative rules involving IT to ensure compliance with the provisions of 2-17-501 through 2-17-503, MCA. These three sections of Montana code specify the data processing responsibilities and IT security duties of the DOA director and establish the Information Technology Advisory Council (ITAC).*

If a department proposes an administrative rule relating to information technology, the Committee may contract for an economic impact statement or require the department proposing an administrative rule to prepare an economic impact statement to measure the fiscal ramifications of the proposed rule. This action by the Committee requires the affirmative vote of at least five members.

- **Ë** Committee staff sent letters on behalf of the Committee to all state

agency administrative rule reviewers requesting that the Committee be placed on their mailing lists for notification of administrative rule changes that might involve information technology. The Committee intended to review the rule changes and exercise its statutory authority, if necessary, to request an economic impact statement or "take any action available as a remedy under the Montana Administrative Procedure Act". The Committee received no IT-specific administrative rule change notices to review.

Option #5: *HB 89 permits the Committee to investigate and report on **any** matter concerning information technology or state management systems.*

- **Ë** As indicated by the activities fulfilling the Committee's oversight duties, members examined a wide range of state information technology projects and management systems, including but not limited to electronic transactions, public safety communications, IT staff pay scales, GIS Cadastral mapping, state desktop software standards, Year 2000 compliance, ISD rates, and Legislative Branch IT developments.

1997-98 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON STATE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

IT PROJECTS CONSIDERED

1. MT PRRIME
   MBARS
   University System

2. Year 2000

3. HB 188
   Project META
   Department of Corrections IT Projects

4. Electronic Transactions Act

5. Public Safety Communications

6. GIS Cadastral Mapping

MT PRRIME

- MT PRRIME stands for the Montana Project to Reengineer the Revenue and Information Management Environment.

- MT PRRIME began with the passage of SJR 23 during the 1995 legislative session, and the project was funded with the passage of HB 188 during the 1997 legislative session.

- MT PRRIME will replace the information systems that the state relies on for budgeting and accounting (Statewide Budgeting and Accounting System or SBAS), payroll (Personnel, Payroll, and Position Control or PPP), asset management (Property Accountability Management System or PAMS), and warrant writing--systems that are fundamental to the operation of state government and delivery of services.

- PeopleSoft was chosen to be MT PRRIME's software vendor for all of the modules except the budget module.

- Dave Ashley, the MT PRRIME project director, told the OCSMS at its first meeting that the system would provide increased functionality in state systems; improvement of core systems so agencies do not have to develop their own programs to achieve the flexibility that the outdated state legacy systems did not offer; and solutions to the Year 2000 problem for the systems it will replace.

- The OCSMS was updated regularly on the progress of MT PRRIME. The Committee paid particular attention to the development and implementation schedule of the budget module, MBARS, and the University System's decision to implement a business process system separate from MT PRRIME.

- The OCSMS requested that a study resolution be drafted that called for a review of the state's contracting laws and procedures (Appendix A). The idea for the study emerged as a result of numerous discussions with the consultants working on MT PRRIME and with DOA staff who expressed an interest in receiving guidance from the Legislature on contracting procedures.

MBARS

< MBARS replaces the Montana Integrated Budget System (MIBS). MBARS is used by all agencies and branches of state government for budget preparation. MBARS is also used by the Office of Budget and Program Planning to develop the executive budget and the Legislative Fiscal Analyst's office to analyze the budget for the Legislature. MBARS is essential to the development of House Bill No. 2, the general appropriations bill.

< Legacy Solutions is the company providing the software and software support for MBARS.

< The implementation of MBARS was initially scheduled for May 1998. Agencies began using the system in August 1998, and the system first began producing data in September 1998.

The University System and MT PRRIME

< Section 17-1-102, MCA, requires all state agencies, including units of the Montana University System (MUS), to input data into the state's administrative systems (SBAS, PPP) before the end of each fiscal year.

< The MUS has for years maintained human resource and accounting systems separate from SBAS and PPP, entering data as required by law, through various interfaces.

< Recognizing the need to upgrade its own aging systems and facing the Year 2000 problem, the MUS had begun renovating its information systems and integrating student administration data with financial and human resource data long before MT PRRIME was conceived. A 1996 memorandum to the MT PRRIME steering committee indicates that the MUS had decided to remain out of MT PRRIME's scope.

< The MUS's financial and human resource reporting needs are similar to the rest of state government; however, operational needs are quite different. The MUS purchased and began implementing SCT/Banner, a software suite of products specifically developed for the unique needs of higher education information systems.

< To allay fears that the MUS's decision to develop a system separate from MT PRRIME would result in impaired communication and unnecessary

costs, the MUS presented to the OCSMS and the Legislative Finance Committee the following commitments to the state:

(1) The MUS will reach agreement with the central state agencies with regard to the state's information needs, including the level of detail required and the frequency of reports.

(2) The information needed by state agencies will be delivered in an efficient and acceptable format and medium and in a manner that can be compatible with and integrated into the MT PRRIME management information system.

(3) There will be no unnecessary duplication of effort between MT PRRIME and the development of the university information systems.

(4) Staff at state agencies will not be required to learn the information system adopted by the MUS in order to carry out their responsibilities.

(5) The implementation of the MUS management information system will allow for efficient movement between state and university systems. Central state users who so desire will be able to extract data from the university information systems, with the establishment of appropriate security measures and protections.

YEAR 2000

- At each meeting, ISD updated the OCSMS on the progress of Year 2000 compliance efforts.

- The Year 2000 problem (a.k.a. "Y2K bug" or "Millenium Bug") deals with the potential failing of computer software and chips that use dates. Most computers read only the last two digits of the year designation, so when the date changes from 12/31/1999 to 01/01/2000, if unaltered, those computers will read simply 01/01/00, a value that they will not "understand".

- ISD reported to the Committee that the Y2K bug presents problems with date fields, sorts on dates, date comparisons, and date calculations that could result in accounts receivables missed, incorrect calculations of investments, and missed maintenance dates.

- Computer chips that are imbedded in elevators, VCRs, ATMs, motor vehicles, traffic lights, communication systems, and other equipment and machinery also fall within the Y2K bug's scope of effect.

- ISD's role in Y2K compliance has been to coordinate agency efforts to repair or replace noncompliant systems; provide assistance to agencies in making their systems compliant; provide testing labs; and generally assume the lead in facilitating a smooth transition to the Year 2000 for state government computers.

- ISD advised state agencies to inventory their information systems and designate each system as high, medium, or low priority, depending on the scope and nature of impact if the systems fail.

- At its first Y2K presentation to the OCSMS in November 1997, ISD reported that out of 766 total systems, agencies had designated 185 to be high priority; 196 medium priority; and 153 low priority. Two hundred and thirty-two systems were not yet designated.

- Of the 766 systems initially identified, 190 had been made compliant (25%), with 576 yet to repair (75%). Fifty-seven of the compliant systems were high-priority systems.

- With further analysis, the total number of systems decreased to 711.

- At its final Y2K presentation to the OCSMS in September 1998, ISD reported that 39% of the 711 systems were compliant and 61% were noncompliant. Seventy-two of the compliant systems were high priority; 108 were medium priority; and 95 were low priority.

- ISD plans to continue its oversight role in rendering state government systems Y2K-compliant and assisting agencies with questions and system testing.

HOUSE BILL NO. 188

< The OCSMS heard presentations from the Department of Revenue (DOR) and the Department of Corrections (DOC) regarding the agencies' planned uses for the funds generated by HB 188.

< The title of HB 188 reads:

A bill for an act entitled: an act authorizing the creation of state debt through the issuance of general obligation bonds; appropriating the proceeds of the bonds for information technology projects for the biennium ending June 30, 1999; providing for debt service payments from the general fund and other sources; providing for matters relating to the issuance of the bonds and the appropriation of the bond proceeds; and providing an immediate effective date.

< HB 188 directs distribution of the bond proceeds as follows:

Upon the sale of general obligation bonds by the board of examiners, the following bond proceeds are appropriated from the capital projects fund to each responsible agency for the following information technology projects:

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE	14,000,000
Integrated Revenue and Tax Systems (Consolidation of Employer's Reporting for Income Tax Withholding, Old Fund Liability Tax, and Unemployment Insurance Contributions; Income Tax Modernization; and Property Tax Integration)	
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION	19,800,000
Montana Project to Reengineer Revenue and the Information Management Environment (MT PRRIME)	
OFFICE OF BUDGET AND PROGRAM PLANNING	500,000
Montana Integrated Budget System (MIBS)	
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR	3,600,000

Unemployment Benefit Package

MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

3,200,000

Technology Initiative

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

1,890,408

Information Technology Plan

< HB 188 allows for expenditures of bond proceeds for "information technology project administration and implementation, including software and required hardware, software licensing, and contracted services."

HB 188 -- Department of Corrections

< In April 1998, the Correctional Standards and Oversight Committee (CSOC), completed an overview of the Adult Correctional Information System (ACIS) and requested a progress report on the DOC's information systems.

< The DOC responded to the CSOC's request for a progress report on May 1, 1998. As reported to the CSOC, the DOC's information systems plan for the 1998/99 biennium includes[3]:

1) Contract for the development of new and/or enhanced programs for collecting and reporting ACIS data.
BDM International is conducting system design sessions for an Open Database Connectivity platform, which will extract information from Judiciary, Justice, and Public Health data systems to improve ease of input and retrieval of data as well as improve flexibility of ad hoc queries and structured reports. Current systems dictate separate ACIS [Adult

[3] The DOC information systems data is taken directly from a handout provided to the CSOC. A copy is included with the CSOC's May 1, 1998 minutes maintained by the Montana Legislative Services Division.

Correctional Information System] data entry at Cascade County. Interfaces between [the DOC's] data system and in-state contract facilities will be part of the new design.

2) Develop interface between CAPS (juveniles) and ACIS (adults).

Data elements have been identified for creation of a Juvenile Information Module in [the DOC's] data systems project. Data flow processes and relationships are being created, identified, and verified in [the DOC's] current development (system design) phase. Input and output interfaces to CAPS will be part of the design.

3) Complete interface between ACIS and DOJ's [the Department of Justice's] CHRS [Criminal History Records System].

Interface to provide inmate status to DOJ has been created and will be expanded in new ACIS system design to take advantage of the efficiencies of shared data.

4) Expand [the] DOC's Wide Area Network and provide remote entry/access to offender data and electronic communications to all Probation and Parole Offices.

All office are on line as of February. Some existing network links are being upgraded to support the requirements of new technologies; i.e., fingerprint, photo, fiber LAN.

5) Implement digitized fingerprint system.

A statewide system is being constructed in conjunction with [the] DOJ and the Western Identification Network for capture, storage, and identification. A vendor has been selected and locations have been identified.

6) Digital photo/bar code system for staff and offender ID.

Cascade County has been upgraded; the Montana State Prison was ordered for installation in June 1998; Missoula and Dawson Counties expected installation in late August or early September 1998.

7) Install optical scanning capabilities.

"Image +" brand software, bundled with the AS/400

upgrade, will enable creating and storing forms electronically.

8) Provide training for staff in use of new systems and increase support capabilities throughout the department.
Network administrators have been added in Deer Lodge, Helena, and Billings. Vacant programmer positions have been filled in Helena and Deer Lodge.

9) Update Five Year Plan.
The updated plan will optimize [the] DOC's utilization of infrastructure and data system enhancements through recommendations from [the] DOC's Automation Planning Task Force, and, partnering with [the] DOJ, Judiciary, the Department of Public Health and Human Services, and others, identify and develop opportunities for improving workflows through data sharing.

HB 188 --Department of Revenue
Project META

< At the Committee's March 10, 1998, meeting, the DOR provided the OCSMS with an overview of Project META, a "comprehensive, long-term change program...to transform the way [the Department] conducts its business".[4]

< The project is centered around organizing work and information systems in accordance with business processes like tax receipt activities and compliance auditing, rather than in accordance with tax **type** categories such as property, income, and corporate taxes.

< The ultimate goal of the project is a process-centered organization, created by integrating business procedures and information systems, ultimately enhancing customer service. Specifically, with regard to customer service, the DOR aims to:

1. provide "one-stop shopping" for taxpayers;

[4] Department of Revenue handout provided to OCSMS members. A copy is included with the OCSMS March 10, 1998 minutes (as Exhibit #1) maintained by the Legislative Services Division.

2. improve the DOR's image among taxpayers;
3. provide the internal resources necessary for improved customer service;
4. attract and retain employees with broad skills;
5. enforce laws fairly and equitably;
6. provide a tool for customer feedback and resolution;
7. clearly identify the roles of DOR employees and programs;
8. enhance staff skills and knowledge base; and
9. perform processes efficiently.[5]

< Project META was funded through $17.8 million in bonding authority contained in HB 188.

< The DOR identified the following core business processes around which to focus improvement activities: strategic revenue management; quality assurance; customer intake; compliance, valuation, and resolution; document and information processing; accounts receivable collections; departmental accounting; and other departmental internal support services.

< The accounts receivable and collections process revision includes the concept of an integrated state center to collect revenues from anyone who owes money to any entity of state government.

ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS LEGISLATION

< Recognizing the emergence of technology that allows a document to be “signed”, transmitted entirely electronically, and acknowledged by the courts as a legal document, the Information Technology Advisory Council (ITAC) established a subcommittee in January 1998 to examine what that technology is, how other states are handling electronic commerce, and what the Montana Legislature might do to ensure that it is used properly and with minimum risk. Peter Blouke, Department of Commerce

[5] Excerpted from DOR handout to OCSMS members. A copy is included with the OCSMS March 10, 1998 minutes (as Exhibit #1) maintained by the Legislative Services Division.

Director, chaired the ITAC subcommittee, which received staff support from the DOA's Information Services Division (ISD).

< The subcommittee studied the different kinds of technology used to create an original signature on an electronic document, examined legislation from other states and what those states have learned since implementing laws regulating electronic commerce, examined the model Uniform Electronic Transactions Act prepared by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, discussed the portions of Montana code that would have to be amended, and eventually brought some draft legislation before ITAC.

< Electronic commerce is a broad and complex issue, and understanding all of the potential implications of the technology requires serious study of not only the technology, but of the legal ramifications and archiving procedures.

< Electronic documents must be able to undergo the same scrutiny and the same preservation as paper documents. Because of the complicated array of issues associated with the legislation, ITAC determined to take no formal action on an electronic commerce bill. Secretary of State Mike Cooney, however, decided to pursue legislation and requested a bill for the 1999 session.

< The bill requested became House Bill No. 188 (Ch. 365, L.1999) and was carried by Representative Carley Tuss (see Appendix B).

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS/MONTANA CADASTRAL MAPPING PROJECT

< The ISD provided the OCSMS with an overview of its Geographic Information System (GIS) and Cadastral Mapping activities at the Committee's March 10, 1998 meeting.

< Information provided to the Committee contained the following definition of GIS: "A computer system for assembling, storing, manipulating and displaying data which contains physical locations (geographic coordinated) of features and information about those features (attribute data)."[6]

< Cadastral Mapping reflects the quantity, value, and ownership of real estate. A map shows or records property boundaries, subdivision lines, buildings, and other property details.

< Many of the official maps showing property boundaries and ownership are on paper, are stored in various county and city offices, and are degrading rapidly. In some cases, these paper maps are the only land ownership records available.

< Seventy-five percent of Montana's land parcels are only mapped on paper or not mapped at all.

< Land ownership records are accessed every day by private citizens, builders, developers, emergency services personnel, environmental researchers, utility companies, the real estate business, and local, state, and federal agencies.

< When completed, the product will display a plot of land on a computer screen and, when highlighted, will provide such parcel information as ownership, acreage, address, value, school district, soil type, structures,

[6] All of the GIS/Cadastral Mapping information is derived from a handout provided to the OCSMS at its March 10, 1998 meeting. A copy is included with the OCSMS March 10,1998 minutes (Exhibit #2) maintained by the Legislative Services Division.

zoning, utilities, flood history, and access.

< The project is estimated to take 4 years and will be funded with private and public dollars.

PUBLIC SAFETY SHARED COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

< The OCSMS received background information and an overview of the public safety communications system project at its March 10, 1998 meeting.

< The state's public safety radio provides two-way communication for over 2,500 law enforcement officers, 8,000 professional and volunteer firefighters, 7,000 Emergency Medical Services personnel, and numerous other public service agencies. More than 118 radio systems are dedicated to public safety communication.

< Inadequacies in the aging radio systems include insufficient maintenance, poor coverage, increasing channel congestion and growing channel interference, degrading infrastructure, and limited functionality in light of technological advances. The changing federal regulatory environment is also impacting public safety radio systems.

< With some communities experiencing growth and with the increase in visitors to the state, there is a growing demand for emergency response from law enforcement, medical personnel, firefighters, search and rescue personnel, and hazardous materials specialists.

< Phase I of the project began in September 1994 with the formation of the Public Safety Communications Task Force and ended with adoption of the final system concept design. In January 1998, the Public Safety Communications Council was appointed by Governor Racicot. Represented on the Council are tribal emergency services, local governments, the Montana Power Company, the state and federal governments, and fire chiefs.

< The complete upgrade of the public safety communications systems and infrastructure is scheduled for completion in 10 years. Implementation will involve selecting vendors, creating a governing structure, and installing the new infrastructure and new systems.

CONCLUSION

With just the smattering of information technology issues that this report touches on, it is clear how vast and complex the technological universe has become in a relatively short period of time. For governmental entities at the local, state, and federal levels, one of the challenges is overcoming the notoriously slow pace at which government traditionally operates to react to the lightning-quick technological advances occurring every day. As a branch of state government, it is imperative that the Legislature stay on top of information technology opportunities and problems, even as many of its members would prefer to remain "blissfully ignorant". Indeed, there is a steep learning curve associated with information technology issues, as the OCSMS was quick to discover. But technology is expensive, and as the entity charged with determining how and where taxpayers dollars are spent, the Legislature needs to have at least a basic working knowledge of computers, operating systems, and databases. A state government can ill afford to lose the edge that technology offers, nor can it turn away from the incredible opportunities that the automation of government processes can bring to the taxpayer. During its two interims of work, the OCSMS took an important step in elevating the Legislature's understanding of how information technology can benefit the citizens of the state and render the state's business processes as efficient as available technology will allow. While the OCSMS was not reauthorized beyond the 1997-98 interim, the Legislature's investment in information technology remains, as does its oversight responsibilities. All indications are that the new millennium will usher in technological advances beyond those contemplated even 10 years ago, resulting in some dramatic changes in the way government operates. The legislator of the 21st Century will have to be prepared.